



**PROTECTION & ADVOCACY
SERVICE, INC.**

Frederick F. (Rick) Swegles, Esq.
President
Port Huron

Pamela Bellamy, Ph.D.
1st Vice President
Lansing

Kathy Flowers
2nd Vice President
Flint

Frederick A. Swegles
Secretary
Port Huron

Tom Landry
Treasurer
Farmington Hills

Stoney Polman
Immediate Past President
Lansing

Mark Brewer, Esq.
Mt. Clemens

Ronald D. Bush, II
Detroit

Donna DePalma, MSW, CSW
Pinckney

Sheila Faunce
East Lansing

Robert Furtado
Bad Axe

Mark Lezotte
Detroit

Ann E. Manning
Royal Oak

Susan L. Odgers, Ph.D., ABD
Traverse City

Ernest A. Reynolds
Roscommon

Robert W. Ryan
Lansing

Kate Pew Wolters
Grand Rapids

Testimony of Tom Masseau, Director of Public Policy
Michigan Protection & Advocacy Service, Inc.
before the
Michigan Senior Health, Security & Retirement Committee

October 18, 2005

Good Morning, Madame Chairwoman, members of the House Senior Health, Security & Retirement Standing Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify before you today. I am Tom Masseau, Director of Public Policy with Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service, Inc., a private, non-profit organization which provides information and advocacy services to people with disabilities throughout Michigan. Our mission is to advance their dignity, equality, self-determination and expressed choices; and to promote, expand and protect their human and legal rights.

Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service, Inc. (MPAS) is the agency designated by the Governor to implement the federally authorized protection and advocacy systems for people with disabilities. I am here today to support House Bills 5166, 5167, and 5168. MPAS has been involved with the workgroup put forth by the Michigan Department of Community Health.

Safety and receiving care with dignity for people with disabilities are the primary goals pursued by Michigan Protection and Advocacy Service, Inc. While we recognize that not everyone in the industry is a "bad" worker, protections should be in place. Those protections should include a mandatory background check.

The bill package, as introduced, provides safeguards for residents, families' members and workers. Consumers and their family members now know that workers who care for the state's most vulnerable population are getting a thorough background check before they are hired, both the State Police and the FBI. There is an appeal process for those workers feel they have been wrongly identified during the process of the background check.

We applaud Rep. Newell, Murphy, and Zelenko for their introduction of these bills and look forward to the day the bill becomes law. Again, thank you for this opportunity.

Livonia Office:

Livonia Corporate Towers
29200 Vassar Blvd., Suite 200 Livonia, MI 48152-2116
248.473.2990
1.800.414.3956 (Toll Free)
248.473.4104 (Fax)

Main Office:

4095 Legacy Parkway, Suite 500 · Lansing, MI 48911-4263
517.487.1755 (Voice or TTY)
800.288.5923 (Information and Referral)
517.487.0827 (Fax)

Marquette Office:

129 W. Baraga Ave., Suite A · Marquette, MI 49855-4644
906.228.5910
866.928.5910 (Toll Free)
906.228.9148 (Fax)